PROWWESS

Promotion of the Role of Women in Water and Environmental Sanitation Services

An Interregional Programme of the United Nations Development Programme

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Cover Photo: Kenyan women are trained to repair and maintain handpumps. Curt Carnemark.

Right: In Mali, a bucket secures a place in the queue for water.

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J Villerius

Nearly one-quarter of the world's people—over 1,200 million women, men and children—do not have easy access to a safe and reliable supply of drinking water.

Even more human beings—an estimated 1,900 million—are without adequate sanitation.

This situation has grave consequences for health and productivity. In the developing world, 25 million children under five die every year from water-related illnesses. In rural areas the trek to collect water sometimes takes women and girls up to 12 hours a day, draining time and energy they might otherwise devote to farming, family care, education or income-earning activities.

Village mapping helps to site wells and latrines in Bolivia.

Lessons of the Decade

The International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade (1981—1990) has seen concerted action by developing countries, donors and several UN agencies to increase drinking water and sanitary waste disposal coverage. Billions of dollars and thousands of technicians have been deployed to drill wells, install pumps and build latrines.

However, the new facilities have often had a negligible impact on health and productivity. Over half the installations break down within a few years, mainly due to a lack of preventive maintenance, and are not repaired. Many others go unused.

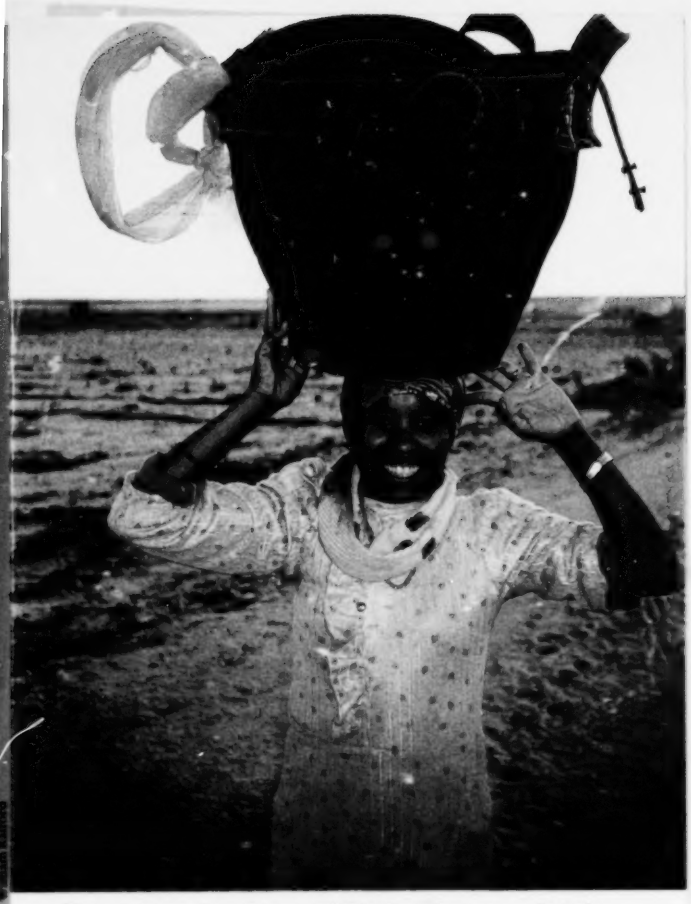
This shows that money and technicians alone cannot ensure sustainable water and sanitation facilities. Equally essential *is the involvement of the people who benefit from the* systems at all stages of project development and implementation. Community participation—and particularly women's involvement—is therefore increasingly recognized as an essential ingredient.

Ron Sawyer

Untapped Reservoir

Women are the main carriers and managers of water for household use, as well as the custodians of family hygiene. They therefore constitute an enormous but largely untapped reservoir of initiative and creativity for solving water and sanitation problems. With their knowledge of community needs and customs they can best determine where to place water points. As they suffer most when facilities break down, they have a vested interest in ensuring good maintenance. They provide children with their first health lessons. And they are the ones who decide *not* to use new facilities if they do not respond to needs.

Guidelines and checklists for involving women in water and sanitation projects have been produced and distributed. Still, many projects underway—and even some still on the drawing board—do not reflect women's roles except in a general way. This is mainly due to a lack of experience and knowledge on *how*



Water portage is only one of this Egyptian woman's tasks.

women's participation can be encouraged, and how this translates into policies, work plans, funding, human resources, institutions and activities at the field level.

READEX FICHE

Enhancing Women's Roles

To take advantage of women's knowledge and skills in this area so vital to their lives, in 1983 the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) launched an interregional project, PROMOTION OF THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL SANITATION SERVICES (PROWWESS). The initiative is supported by the Governments of Canada, Finland, Norway and the United States.

PROWWESS/UNDP is the only worldwide programme specifically aimed at developing replicable models for involving community women in sustainable, effectively used and environmentally sound drinking water supply and sanitation projects. It carries out demonstration projects in a variety of situations and countries to illustrate both the value of women's participation and various means of achieving it. Activities, linked to the Water Decade strategies, include:

- participating, with other donors, in sector reviews and project **planning** activities, in order to incorporate aspects dealing with women's participation in an integrated way.
- undertaking technical assistance activities for implementation of field projects, in particular through **training** of trainers in participatory methodology in close co-operation with relevant local institutions.
- developing and applying at field level, participatory approaches for **data collection** and research, monitoring and evaluation, including the development of indicators and the production of case studies.
- providing **printed and audio-visual materials** for use at different levels. These cover such topics as policy/strategy; project planning/assessment and review; and training in participatory methodologies which maximize community involvement and integrate water supply, sanitation and health. (See back cover for selected examples of these materials.)
- developing a **network** of individuals and institutions which can serve as a resource base for PROWWESS and others.

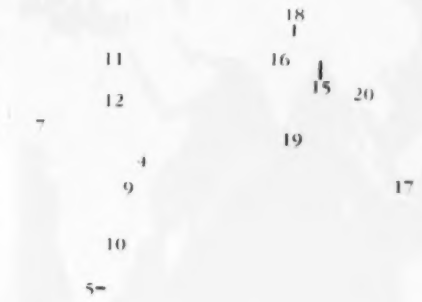
AFRICA
1. Burkina Faso
2. Cape Verde
3. Guinea Bissau
4. Kenya
5. Lesotho
6. Mali
7. Nigeria
8. Senegal
9. Tanzania
10. Zimbabwe

ARAB STATES
11. Egypt
12. Sudan

LATIN AMERICA
13. Bolivia
14. Mexico

ASIA
15. Bangladesh
16. India
17. Indonesia
18. Nepal
19. Sri Lanka
20. Thailand

PROWESS has worked with governments on projects in 20 countries in Africa, the Arab States, Asia and Latin America. In the early years it supported small-scale demonstration projects. By 1990 some of these were reaching provincial or national scale. Efforts are continuing with particular emphasis on refining methodologies and training staff of national and international institutions. For



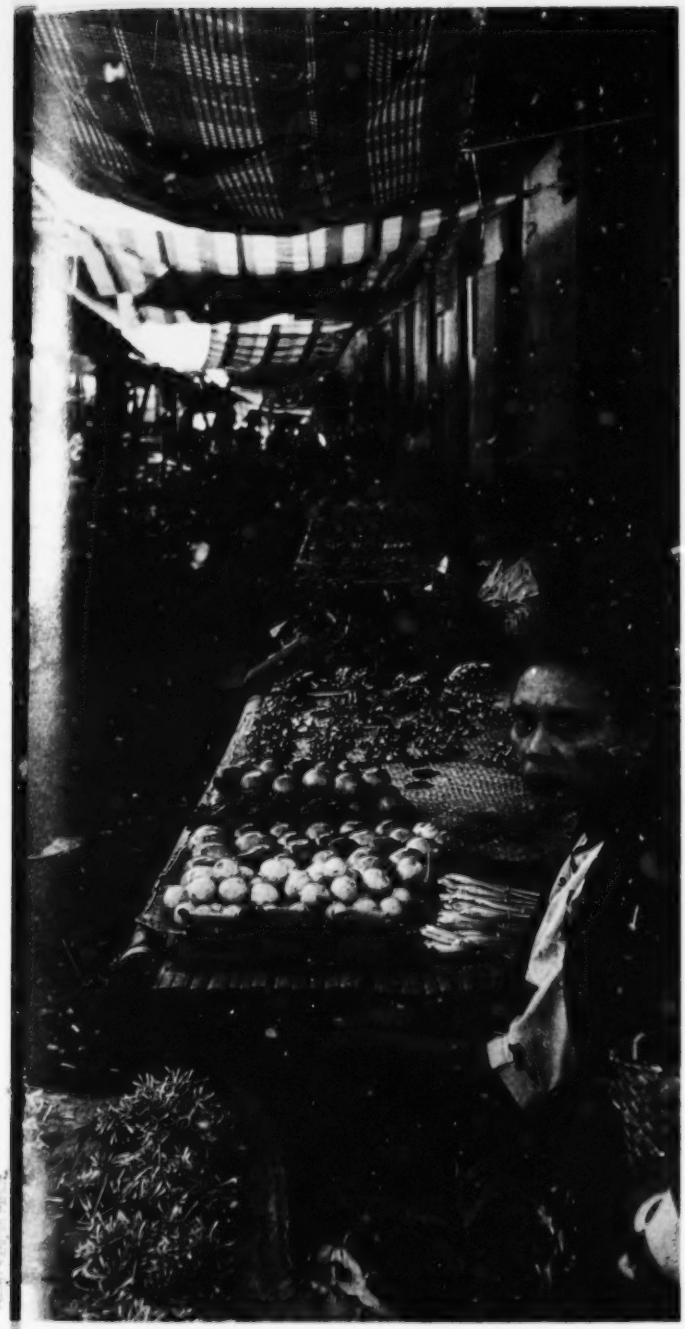
Countries Receiving PROWWESS Support

example. PROWESS-trained staff are working within the UNDP/World Bank Water and Sanitation training and advisory teams.

Social and Economic Benefits

PROWWESS/UNDP experience has shown that early and wide participation by women and their communities pays off in better maintenance and greater assumption of responsibility for facilities by communities. It also leads to better hygiene practices and other socio-economic gains such as improved health and an increase in income-producing activities. The multiple benefits—which have been evident under a wide variety of geographic, cultural and economic conditions—are illustrated by a few examples:

Indonesia. In a rural community assisted by PROWWESS/UNDP, all 50 of the new improved water points installed between June 1986 and August 1988 continue to function, having received multiple repairs from community members. Water committees collect funds for maintenance and new facilities. While all village decisions were previously expected to be taken by male leaders or outside agents, women, and men who are not leaders, made over



Time and water saved through water and sanitation projects often lead to socio-economic benefits such as increased vegetable production.

half of the determinations governing water and sanitation facilities. In a study of 122 women, the number of women earning income increased by 23 per cent between 1986 and 1987, largely due to the sale of vegetables watered by the new facilities.

Kenya. Thanks to user water committees which maintained them and had repaired multiple breakdowns, in 1987 all pumps were functioning in a rural water supply scheme which provided around 100 new water points in a southern community between 1983 and 1985. In raising funds to cover maintenance costs, some of the committees decided to lower their rates when they found they had collected too much money. Others used the surplus for micro-enterprises, incorporated as NGOs and established bank accounts. All committee treasurers are women.

Lesotho. Families are expected to construct and pay for their own latrines in a rural sanitation project for which PROWWESS/UNDP provided training in health education and participatory techniques. The initial construction target, calling for 400 latrines to be built over three years, was surpassed by 50 per

cent and demand now exceeds capacity. There was also a 30 per cent drop in diarrhoea rates in areas where health education led to habitual hand washing and increased water use.

Bangladesh. From 1983 to 1987, 1,800 young women were trained as volunteers in a programme of hygiene education and health action for urban slum dwellers. By 1987, around 1,500 remained active, working up to 60 hours per week. Their efforts were largely responsible for lowering the rate of diarrhoea by 22 per cent in a sample study. The next phase of the project, expanded and funded by other donors, will add economic and educational activities, which have been identified by women as priorities.

Training Package

PROWWESS/UNDP: Video on Regional Training Workshop in Tanzania, 1988 (English), 1989 (French). Describes the process of a workshop for personnel from national institutions in anglophone African countries, methods used, results.

PROWWESS/UNDP: Community Participation—A Challenge for Trainers—by Lyra Srinivasan, (English/French). A tool for trainers in field projects. Particular emphasis on methodologies and experiences in their application in PROWWESS/UNDP activities.

The video and training manual can be purchased as a package, or separately. Write for price and payment details.

For More Information

Partial listing of free publications

PROWWESS/UNDP and the World Bank: Kenya—People, Pumps and Agencies, by Deepa Narayan-Parker and Mary McNeill, 1989 (English) pp. 56. A case study of the South Coast Hand-Pump project with particular emphasis on Kenya Water for Health Organization (KWAHO), describing partnership between a Government, an NGO and donors.

PROWWESS/UNDP: Dhaka—Volunteers Against Diarrhoea, by Elsie Shallon, 1988 (English) pp. 25. A description of a programme working with women volunteers in an urban slum area to improve health education and action.

PROWWESS/UNDP: Indonesia—Managers of Change, by Deepa Narayan-Parker, 1989 (English/French) pp. 46. A case study of Family Welfare Movement/Ministry of Health Activities in West Timor. Particularly rich in data on such aspects as change in women's lives, water use and economic effects. Slide show on Indonesia experience also available at a nominal cost.

World Bank and PROWWESS/UNDP: From Pilot to National Programme—Rural Sanitation in Lesotho, by staff of joint UNDP/World Bank Programme and PROWWESS, (English) pp. 53. Traces the development of rural sanitation in Lesotho from pilot project to national programme with emphasis on involvement of the private sector.

PROWWESS/UNDP: Goals and Indicators for Integrated Water Supply and Sanitation Projects, by Deepa Narayan-Parker, 1989 (English/French) pp. 20. Emphasis on design of indicators for planning and evaluation.

PROWWESS/UNDP: PEGESUS, by Deepa Narayan-Parker, 1989 (English) pp. 14. Analytical framework for designing and assessing community water supply and sanitation projects and programmes, concentrating on goals and management tasks.

To obtain materials—or further information on PROWWESS/UNDP services—contact:

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